FREE

“We hold in our gravity a deep reverence for love beyond the limited words we have. We know the devoted embrace of solidarity – people leaning in to one another against involuntary servitude and for a world of mutual aid.

If we are convicted, it is of love for each other, and for our community, to which all brave hearts beat devotion to the impossible task of liberation. We are grateful for those who care take, for without you, freedom would be even more distant.”

PEPPY & KRYSTAL

freepeppyandkrystal.blackblogs.org

with whatever weapons at hand

"When I read your letters, my soul escapes this place to walk alongside you, to commune; and with a big inhale I share our smiles with others experiencing incarceration. Thank you for reaching through these windowless walls. Respect and solidarity to all the bravehearts!"

Write to Peppy:

Brian DiPippa #66590-510
FCI Elkton
Federal Correctional Institution
P.O Box 10
Lisbon, OH 44432

& Maybe Together

We are who we become to be. I couldn't change that I hurt for others' hurt. I couldn't look away. I couldn't walk away. And maybe, I stayed with the hurt long enough to make a friend. And maybe that friendship grew with others. And maybe these friendships became deeper as shit got realer. And maybe as shit got realer we learned more. But we were still young. So we played and laughed. We were curious so we traveled to lands far near.And maybe we learned ways and means as students of the lands from gutters and fields. And maybe we outwardly with many more of us. And maybe then, in and up with jobs and kids, and losses, so many losses. And we remember mourn our fallen and we return to the hurt.

We awaken with this pain, this knowing this longing. We rise to greet the day and hold both ambition and tears into future held by the choices we make in the present and in the past. And now, I held hostage in this literal prison, this place, we have yet to abolish has souls behind these walls and there is hurt. I can't look or walk away; I can't not feel all of this. This forced separation from my other half; distant lovers singing songs of sorrow for a better tomorrow.

This which has me asking our ancestors for guidance. This, which now has you; friends I met along the way, friends who go by many names who sometimes call compta, heval, koukolofori, comrade, And now in here, brother.

And maybe you remind me, what has always been true – new possibilities and horizons come; for there is always a way, a way, tough and tender as Che would say.

And so maybe I reveal share, listen with all the push our movements have so we are who we become to be (with a little help from our friends).

Which can always be as radiant as the warm glow of a sun setting across across the bullet-rattled lands of kurdistan where heval, we held hands in comfort, with loyalty at the edge of your autonomous neighborhood. For our world has many worlds and many colors. And maybe you never left with your farewell-as martyrs never die. Your hope and smile survive.

Biji Biji Rojava.

And in the deep green jungles of Chiapas, you , compa, carved out a liberated territory, to sing, dance late into the night. You welcomed me to your gentle vibrancy of colorful dresses and pitch black halacavas.

The Caricols of Morelia and Oventic held thousands of years of history and maybe, it seems, we hide our face to reveal ours, ourselves.

¡La Lucha Sigue! ¡Zapatista vive!

And maybe when we're not seen by terrible eyes we can become much more than a foes narrative a prosecutor's subject. Much more than "criminal", "elements". Behind these walls are our community members. I am an abolitionist. My work is here now. I say to the men: I will always give you my all to expand what is possible. So show me what you love, let me see through your eyes as you through mine. Our Liberation is bound together. Let our memories be our escape plan.

Yours In Solidarity

Peppy

"I've always seen myself as a collection of sparks, passions, lives that I have been fortunate enough to become with.

It's an honor to have worked with so many.

I wanted to offer both a reflection and a continuance of our journeys.

There is so much more to say and I endeavor to, for now this is a start."

Peppy looks forward to hearing from all supporters! Here are some things Peppy likes if you're looking to write about shared interests; skateboarding, comedy, uplifting and heartwarming stories, and beautiful descriptions of changing landscapes wherever you may be writing him from. Peppy also likes learning about people and places all over the globe. So, feel free to reach out and connect on any topic of interest to you!

Please be careful what you include in your letter to Peppy. Even though he's now in the post-sentencing phase and is currently being held at the facility where he'll be serving out the remainder of his sentence, it's important to keep in mind that all mail will be monitored. But we won't let that stop us from directly communicating our support! There's still so much to share to keep him connected with the communities and movement he's a part of.

Donate

Peppy and Krystal need your support! In their sentencing, they're jointly tasked with paying more than $50k dollars in restitution. This is in addition to commissary and the costs of prison support for the remainder of Peppy's sentence. Please donate today and spread the word!

freepeppyandkrystal.blackblogs.org/donate/

We remain so grateful to all of you. These punitive structures that we've been navigating together exist to separate and isolate, and our solidarity stands as a rebuke and inspiration.

Background

In the early hours of May 19th, 2023, heavily-armed agents raided the home of two Pittsburgh community members, Brian "Peppy" DiPippa and Krystal DiPippa. Nearly a month and a half later, they were both federally indicted, and on June 30th,2023, they surrendered to the court.

The case against Peppy and Krystal (USA v. DIPIPPA et al, (W.D. Pa. 2024) arose out of an April 18, 2023, demonstration against a University of Pittsburgh-sanctioned event that promoted hatred toward transgender people and communities. The speaking event features notorious transphobes Brad Polumbo and Michael Knowles, and posed the question, "should transgenderism be regulated by law?"

The government alleges that in the protests outside the event, a "civil disorder" occurred, when one commercially available firework and two homemade "smoke bombs" were discharged. This "civil disorder" forms the context in which Krystal and Peppy were charged.

Charges

Krystal, who was released on pre-trial probation, was charged with (1) conspiracy and (2) obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder.

Peppy was detained when he surrendered to the court on June 30, 2023 and has been imprisoned since. He was charged with (1) conspiracy, (2) obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder, and (3) use of explosive to commit a federal felony. Both entered not guilty pleas.

Plea and Sentencing

Because they were charged with conspiracy as co-defendants, they were facing equal amounts of prison time, in a range that could have exceeded 10 years. Considering all the personal risks of going to trial,and factoring in the larger political context of the case, Peppy and Krystal accepted a non-cooperating deal and changed their plea. At that hearing, Peppy pled guilty to counts 1 (conspiracy) and 2 (obstruction of law enforcement during a civil disorder); the third count, which carried with it a 10-year mandatory minimum, was dropped. Krystal pled guilty to count 2.

Krystal's plea carries 3 years of probation, but she will not serve any jail time. By statute, Peppy's plea carries a 60-month sentence. On January 6th, 2025, at a sentencing hearing, they were sentenced by a judge in accordance with the statute.

In addition to jail time and probation, they were also ordered to jointly pay restitution to the University of Pittsburgh in the amount of $1,400, along with $47,284 to a University of Pittsburgh police officer for alleged financial damages.

Analysis

The federal government's targeting of Krystal and Peppy is overtly political.

Even before the April 18th protest, FBI agents secretly followed our friends and used tactics straight out of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) playbook to manufacture justification for the May 19th, 2023 raid. Amongst other stalking schemes, federal agents performed a warrantless search of Peppy and Krystal's garbage, in which they allegedly found a discarded pamphlet about the movement to Stop Cop City. Direct from the government's search warrant affidavit: "the "Defend the Atlanta Forest" movement has been active since approximately April 2021 and involves protesters unlawfully occupying a wooded area of land where the city plans to build a police training facility." In the unwarranted trash search, federal agencies allegedly found "a printed zine… discussing anarchist ideology." It is important to note that in the affidavit for a search warrant, the FBI described their following of Peppy and Krystal beginning a week before the April 18th protest – that is, a week before any allegation of any law being broken. The FBI's use of a Stop Cop City pamphlet to justify an aggressive raid on alleged Pittsburgh political activists draws a direct line from the federal crackdown on Atlanta-area organizers to the government's national strategy of repression and intimidation.

In its prosecution, the feds continued trying to criminalize alleged political beliefs, retaliate for alleged participation in the April 18th protest, and intimidate others from protesting and/or supporting the rights and existence of transgender people. During court proceedings, the prosecution continued to dramatize the political dimension of this case,

Sentencing Details

Pep was sentenced to serve 60 months in BOP. As he's served 18 months already, he anticipates being eligible to transition to a halfway house around March 2026 (between 15 and 22 months). After that, he will be on supervised release for 3 years. Krystal was sentenced to 3 years of supervised release and 80 hours of community service.

Pep and Krystal were jointly sentenced to pay $50,225.03, mostly to University Of Pittsburgh Officer TH, with a smaller sum to the University of Pittsburgh. They also were given special assessments of $200 and $100, respectively, and sentenced to repayment of some costs of prosecution and their own punishment. Critically, however, there was no further fine. Pep and Krystal issued a joint statement:

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